

CORRESPONDING WITH THE EDITOR OF THE FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST NEWS SERVICE

July 11, 1997 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

MY DILEMMA

For many years I have conducted extensive correspondence with thousands of people in various parts of the world, and I have always enjoyed it. My first booklet was printed in 1973, and many readers have written to me in the years which have followed and as the number of books and booklets have multiplied. In 1984 we began publishing the monthly O Timothy magazine. This was during our missionary years in South Asia, and as the magazine's distribution grew, my correspondence burden also grew. I received hundreds of letters each year from readers in that part of the world, and I tried to answer all of them. Since 1989 we have been based back in the States, and God has opened marvelous doors for the wider distribution of O Timothy and our books. Since 1994, we have expanded the distribution of our materials even further via the Internet. At least 2,000 people receive my daily articles electronically, and that does not mention those who read the magazine and the books and who visit our web site, etc.

With this increase in the distribution of my writings, the volume of correspondence has increased beyond the ability of one man to handle. I receive at least 1,000 personal letters and e-mail each month. The increase in distribution of literature has increased our income, but not so significantly that we have been able to hire sufficient helpers. While I do have a part-time secretary and other part-time workers who assist us in manifold ways, they do not have help with my personal correspondence.

MY REQUEST

1. YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO WRITE TO ME. I LOVE TO HEAR FROM OUR READERS, BUT I TRUST THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND MY SITUATION AND NOT DEMAND THAT I REPLY. I continue to answer hundreds of letters and e-mail each month, but I cannot and I will not try to answer every single question or comment that comes to me these days.

2. IF YOU FIND AN ERROR IN MY WRITINGS, YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO WRITE TO ME ABOUT IT. I WILL DEFINITELY CONSIDER ALL SUCH MATTERS, AND IF I CONCLUDE THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN ERROR, I WILL MAKE A PUBLIC CORRECTION OF THE SAME. (It has often been the case that the error was only in the mind of the reader.) I will not promise, though, that I will carry on a dialogue with you on any topic or that I will try to answer every question you might want to raise.

3. I AM ALWAYS GLAD TO RECEIVE INFORMATION WHICH CAN HELP US HELP OTHERS. Though I receive dozens of periodicals and purchase large numbers of books each year, and though I subscribe to various news services, I certainly do not know everything that is happening. Each year I receive much excellent information from our readers and I am very grateful for it.

4. PLEASE DO NOT ADD ME TO YOUR PERSONAL MAILING LIST WITHOUT MY PERMISSION. Because they read my material, many feel that they know me and therefore I ought to know them. Please try to understand my situation, though. I don't send my material or prayer letters via e-mail to people who do not know me and who do not request it, and I would recommend that you do the same. If you want to add me to some mailing that you have, feel free to ask me, but don't get miffed if I say no! (Yes, many have gotten upset with me because I have requested that they stop sending me their mailings.)

5. I REFUSE TO BE BULLIED AROUND BY THOSE WHO WRITE MOCKING LETTERS AND WHO THINK THEY CAN DEMAND A PIECE OF MY TIME. Regretfully, the Internet aspect of our ministry has greatly multiplied the number of communications which fall into this category. I have better things to do with the fleeting hours of this brief life.

Gratefully, though, most of my readers are not like this.

I appreciate your understanding and your patience with us. We want to be a blessing and a help to God's people. The Lord knows our heart. That is our earnest desire. If we do help you, drop us a line once in a while and let us know. Such letters are my "bread and butter"!

We earnestly covet your prayers.

May the Lord bless and use you mightily in these evil but very interesting days.